

**(ROPE) Meeting Minutes**  
**August 5, 2003**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Gull Lake Recreation Area**

**Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Studies**

(ROPE) meeting attendees: 6

1. Gregg Struss: (C.O.E.)
2. Mary Kay Larson: (C.O.E.)
3. Steve Heins: Private Property Owner – Gull River
4. Bill McGrath: Private Property Owner – President of Round Lake Assoc.
5. Rolf Moen: Private Property Owner – Round Lake
6. Dale Lockwood: DNR Fisheries

-An agenda including a brief summary of the study was passed out to all the attendees. A past agenda for the July 10, 2002, meeting was given to all attendees who were not able to attend that meeting.

-Introductions of the meeting attendees.

-Information was given to attendees on the (ROPE) Web page, and Gregg stressed the point that comments are welcome on the Web page. It also shows the different ROPE meetings being held in the Headwaters.

-Gregg explained that the Corps is in the beginning stages of developing computer models to analyze the regulation of water levels in Gull Lake and that this was the attendees' opportunity to provide input into their preferences for water levels for Gull Lake.

1. Gregg reviewed the Historical Operations (Handout 2) and also explained our operating plan (Handouts 3 and 4), the drawdown process, and reasons for water level fluctuations.
  - a. Concerns for water levels varied among attendees.
    - Rolf Moen, Round Lake resident, would like to see the high end water level raised 4 inches or more. After reviewing the handouts, Rolf commented on how well the Corps was able to control the high water level throughout the summer season and did not see a problem with raising the high water level. He said a larger band might help us to slow down the drawdown process. He would like the drawdown to start as late into the fall season as possible because he likes to leave his boat docks in the water late into the fall season. He also expressed that Bishops Creek is a great concern to the landowners on Round Lake because it is their only access to the Gull Lake Chain of Lakes.
    - Bill McGrath, Round Lake resident, also wanted the high level raised. His concerns were shallow shoreline (shore stations in shallow water), the shallow water at the public accesses, and the depth of Bishops Creek.

Mr. McGrath will also be sending a letter with Round Lake residents' concerns to Gregg Struss for forwarding to Ed McNally (letter attached).

- Steve Heins, Gull River Resident, is concerned about wildlife downstream. He would like to see the discharge not exceed 400 cfs and, if at all possible, not have the big fluctuations in water levels on the river. He agrees that a larger summer band may help alleviate the large fluctuations in water level. He felt that a subtler drawdown when the lake is high would be better for everyone.

- Dale Lockwood, DNR Fisheries, thought that a narrow summer band causes big fluctuations in lake levels. He was very impressed by the control the Corps has had in keeping Gull Lake at a very constant level. He attributes the great tulibee populations in Gull Lake to the stable lake levels. He is concerned that anything over a 3-inch increase in the summer band may affect the bulrush aquatic plant life on the Gull Lake chain. This could also affect the water purification process and the spawning grounds for largemouth bass. Dale also had some concern that the higher water level may affect the wild rice crops on the reservoir and downstream.

2. Attendees discussed and agreed upon a group rating for each category in Handout 5. The group did not feel qualified to rate the Unacceptable Threshold Elevations column and therefore left it blank.
3. Ron Morreim, DNR-Waters Division, called because he could not make the meeting and wanted people to know he is concerned if the water levels in Gull Lake are raised. His concerns were with jurisdictions/regulations/established ordinary high water levels/added erosion problems and possibly increased flooding.
4. Bob Stickler, Round Lake resident, sent a letter expressing his concerns and states in the letter that an elevation of 1194.05 would be perfect. The letter is attached.

8:50 p.m - Adjourned

**William M. McGrath**  
7374 Ojibwa Road  
Brainerd, MN 56401

August 14, 2003

Mr. Gregg A Struss, Resource Manager  
St. Paul District Corps of Engineers  
Headwaters Project Office  
34385 West Highway 2  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Dear Gregg:

As President of the Round Lake Improvement Association, I appreciated the opportunity to learn about the Corps of Engineers ROPE study at the August 5 informational meeting. It is clearly both a major and important undertaking.

In our discussion, I was struck by the observation that you never get complaints about high water, and that you frequently get complaints about low water conditions.

I was also impressed by how carefully the Gull Lake Dam has been managed over the years. I suspect that the consistency of operating policy has caused many property owners who have land adjacent to the lakes controlled by the Gull Lake Dam to organize their buildings, docks and shorelines around the water levels that have existed for many years. Almost any change in operating policies will likely have a major negative impact on many.

From a Round lake property owner's perspective, a higher lake is almost always desirable during the summer boating season. Round is a shallow bowl lake, and property owners experience major inconvenience whenever the water level drops below the normal summer level of 1193.87 feet.

At lower levels, it is difficult to get boats on or off their lifts, the public access on the south side of the lake becomes almost unusable, and Bishop's Creek, between Round and Gull, becomes impassable for all but the smallest boats. There are also more navigational hazards under low water conditions.

Not only is a low lake a hazard and inconvenience, it is also an economic problem. Round Lake property values are approaching those on Gull. However, low water levels that restrict passage between Round and Gull and reduce the recreational quality of the lake might well cause a major drop in property values.

I believe that almost all Round Lake residents would prefer that the current normal summer level of 1193.87 feet be treated as a minimum target during the recreational months.

Sincerely,

William M. McGrath

*William M. McGrath*

Cc: Dr. Rolf Moen

August 5, 2003

MR. GREG STRUSS  
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers  
Gull Lake Dam Area  
Brainerd, Minnesota

Re: ROPE Meeting

Dear Greg:

Let me take this opportunity to thank both you and Bob Engelstad for your ongoing updates on how pool or lake levels are mandated.

We have been a Round Lake resident for nine years and in that time I have seen some fluctuation in lake levels, but this season seems to be well in excess of the norm.

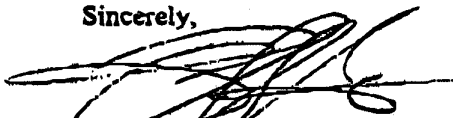
The problem people on our lake encounter is that when lake levels are low, we have to put out more dock and in some cases up to 60 feet more just to have enough depth to float watercraft off their lifts.

Problem two is Bishop's Creek, again when levels are too low which we have encountered on several occasions this season, the creek which is our only access to the rest of the chain becomes non navigable. Watercraft are hung up on the sand, props throwing rocks and sand in every direction, creates a real hazard for anyone trying to pass from one lake to another.

On Saturday June 14, 2003 due to recent rainfall the pool level was at 1194.05. This level was almost perfect and one which all of us would like to see maintained.

Due to a previous engagement I will be unable to attend this meeting. This subject is of utmost importance to all of us on Round Lake. Please keep me abreast of future meetings.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Stickler  
bobstickler@tlpinc.com